

Message Text

SECRET

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /091 W

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R 221645Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3549

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T ALGIERS 3647

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SS, MILI, SOV, AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA: SOVIET VIEWS AND ARMS FOR ALGERIA

1. IN COURSE OF CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR RYKOV DECEMBER 22, I NOTED THAT DURING PAST MONTH A NUMBER OF MY COLLEAGUES HAD BECOME APPRECIABLY MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA OVER SPANISH SAHARA. WHAT DID HE THINK?

2. RYKOV GAVE LONG AND CONVOLUTED REPLY, ESSENCE OF WHICH WAS THAT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE AN OPINION ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. HE AGREED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A PERCEPTIBLE HEATING UP OF LOCAL RHETORIC AND THAT A SORT OF POLITICAL MOBILIZATION WAS TAKING PLACE, BUT HE DID NOT THINK ONE COULD DRAW ANY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF WAR FROM THAT. (I AM INCLINED TO AGREE WITH HIM.)

3. I THEN NOTED THAT THERE WERE A LOT OF WILD RUMORS FLYING, INCLUDING FULL PAGE OF IMAGINATIVE WRITING IN SECRET

SECRET

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AL-MOUDJAHID ABOUT OUR PRESENCE AT KENITRA, AND ALLEGA-

TIONS THAT EITHER THE FRENCH OR SPANISH (DEPENDING ON WHETHER ONE READ ASH-SHAAB OR AL-MOUDJAHID) HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE ATTACK ON LA GUERA, THE FALL OF WHICH HAD JUST BEEN ANNOUNCED. HE SHOULD KNOW THAT THERE WERE ALSO RUMORS CURRENT IN ALGIERS OF THE MASSIVE SOVIET-ALGERIAN ARMS DEAL WITH FIGURES AS HIGH AS \$450 MILLION AND \$500 MILLION BEING ALLEGED.

4. RYKOV SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD HEARD RUMORS ABOUT SOVIET ARMS DEAL. THEY WERE ONLY RUMORS AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE SOVIETS HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE MOROCCANS AND ALGERIANS AND WANTED ONLY A PEACEFUL, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT TO THE SAHARA QUESTION. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS FRANKNESS.

5. COMMENT: RYKOV COULD HARDLY SAY ANTHING ELSE. WE UNDERSTAND FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THAT SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ALGERIA ARE CONTINUING.PARKER

SECRET

NNN

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